# ISSUES OF ECONOMIC AND CULTURAL COOPERATION BETWEEN UZBEKISTAN AND THE REPUBLICS OF KAZAKHSTAN

## Oltiboev Alisher Meylievich,

Independent researcher of Tashkent State Pedagogical University named after Nizami

## **ABSTRACT**

This article deals with economic cooperation between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. The role of economic cooperation between the two countries in strengthening and developing regional relations with Central Asian countries was highlighted. In this regard, it was explained that economic cooperation, tourism ties, business forum and bilateral trade between the two countries are growing rapidly. They also spoke about the formation, achievements and prospects of cultural cooperation between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. The role of the cultural sphere in the cooperation of the countries of the region is highlighted. The role of interstate cultural cooperation in strengthening the genesis of historical development and regional integration on the example of cultural centers and cultural events is analyzed. It has been shown that the policy of interethnic harmony is an influential factor in ensuring cultural cooperation between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. Achievements and problems of cultural cooperation between the two countries were also identified and suggestions for their solution were made.

**Key words**: Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Central Asia, regional cooperation, cooperation, cross-border cooperation, transport communications, interregional forum, cooperation trends, air traffic, positive dynamics of cooperation, culture, integration, stability, cultural centers, friendship festivals, cooperation, common history, common interests, friendly societies, literary cooperation.

#### INTRODUCTION

It is known that the Uzbek and Kazakh peoples have lived side by side for centuries, always sharing their sorrows and joys, and their rich cultural heritage is common.

From time immemorial, Uzbekistan has paid special attention to the establishment and development of cultural cooperation with Central Asian countries. This is because the issue of interethnic harmony has been one of the key factors in the establishment of strong relations between the countries of Central Asia in the course of many years of historical development. Such ancient fraternal traditions were continued in new forms in the conditions of independence.

The population of Central Asia, which includes Uzbekistan, Kazakhstan, Tajikistan, Kyrgyzstan and Turkmenistan, has exceeded 72 million. In 2017, the region's domestic market turnover amounted to 150 billion. It was the U.S. dollar. The large-scale reforms underway in most countries in the region are to some extent improving the investment climate.<sup>1</sup>

## MAIN PART

Since the election of Shavkat Mirziyoyev as President of the country, today Uzbekistan has a positive outlook for regional cooperation in Central Asia due to his more open foreign policy. "Just as our common historical heritage is inseparable, so is the present and future of our countries and peoples.

We have always been close to each other and we will continue to need each other. "2

Following the first consultative meeting of the five Central Asian leaders in Astana in 2018, the second

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>1</sup> https://uzanalytics.com/iqtisodi%D0%B5t/4448/?fbclid=IwAR0WFxZDifzTV-stGWZG81Yq8IEdjJnthNHx9CHKOtH RhCw2eQ9HLe8uQPQ (26.04.2019)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>2</sup> Mirziyoev Sh.M. We will resolutely continue our path of national development and raise it to a new level. Volume 1 - T.: "Uzbekistan", 2017. - 592 p.

working meeting of the region's leaders was held in Tashkent in November 2019, indicating that the policy of strengthening and expanding regional cooperation is being pursued by the countries of the region. The meeting gave a positive impetus to the development of cooperation in ensuring regional security, intensification of trade and economic ties and cross-border cooperation, expansion of transit and transport potential, as well as integrated use of water and energy resources in Central Asia. On this basis, the strengthening of regional cooperation is also strengthened by bilateral official visits and meetings of Central Asian leaders.

Unstable economic and trade cooperation within the region is also a sign of significant differences in the development of countries. In 2016, less than 6 percent of the total exports of the five countries accounted for domestic regional trade. Regional trade accounts for less than 5% of Kazakhstan's total exports, 13% of Uzbekistan's total exports, and less than 1% of Tajikistan's total exports.<sup>3</sup>

The positive dynamics of cooperation between Tashkent and Nur-Sultan is associated with a positive element of strengthening cooperation in the region and pays special attention to regional trends in economic cooperation.

On April 14-15 2019, President of the Republic of Kazakhstan visited Kasim-Jomart Tokayev.

The meeting was the first since Kasym-Jomart Tokayev took office as President of Kazakhstan. The talks focused on the prospects for further expansion of bilateral friendship, good neighbourliness and strategic partnership, political, trade, economic, investment, transport and communications, cultural and humanitarian issues. Priorities for cooperation in various fields were discussed.

Shavkat. Mirziyoyev and Kasim-Jomart Tokayev exchanged views on strengthening regional cooperation and important issues of international importance. The heads of state adopted a joint statement and signed a package of bilateral documents aimed at developing multilateral relations between the two countries.<sup>4</sup>

Including during the visit:

- Joint statement of the heads of state;
- Agreement on the procedure for recognition of official documents confirming residency issued by the competent authorities of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Republic of Kazakhstan under the Intergovernmental Agreement on Avoidance of Double Taxation of Income and Property, signed on June 12, 1996 (in the form of exchange of notes);
- Memorandum of Understanding between the Ministry of Investment and Foreign Trade of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Ministry of National Economy of the Republic of Kazakhstan on the establishment of the International Trade and Economic Center "Central Asia";

The Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Uzbekistan and the Ministry of Foreign Affairs of the Republic of Kazakhstan signed documents such as the Cooperation Program for 2019-2020.<sup>5</sup>

It should be noted that as a result of the consistent implementation of the strategy of economic cooperation between Uzbekistan and the Republic of Kazakhstan in 2017-2019, projects of regional significance have been implemented. By 2017, about 230 enterprises with Kazakh capital were established in Uzbekistan, and more than 130 joint ventures with Uzbek businessmen were launched in Kazakhstan.<sup>6</sup>

Uzbekistan exports to Kazakhstan natural gas, automobiles, vehicles, mineral fertilizers, textiles, electrical and construction materials, fruits and vegetables and many other goods and services. Oil, metals, flour, oil and oil products are imported from Kazakhstan.

In particular, today Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan are implementing cooperation programs and projects in the fields of mechanical engineering, electrical engineering, food industry, tourism, transport and logistics. We are witnessing that cunning projects serve to expand effective economic partnerships. In the short term, bilateral trade between the two countries grew at a rapid pace, reaching \$ 2 billion in 2017, while in 2018 the figure rose by more than 30 percent. In 2019, trade and economic ties between the two countries were further expanded

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>3</sup> https://uzanalytics.com/iqtisodi%D0%B5t/4448/?fbclid=IwAR0WFxZDifzTV-stGWZG81Yq8IEdjJnthNHx9CHKOtH RhCw2eQ9HLe8uQPQ (26.04.2019)

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>4</sup> https://uzanalytics.com/xalqaromunosabat/4436/ (04.05.2019).

https://uzanalytics.com/xalqaromunosabat/4436/ (04.05.2019).

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>6</sup> The newspaper "Public's Word"- March 23, 2017.

and the volume of bilateral trade reached \$ 3.368 billion.<sup>7</sup>

In 2018, in cooperation with the parties, the business circles of the two countries carried out a lot of practical work aimed at strengthening economic ties. Children's clothes made in Uzbekistan were presented at the exhibitions "Childhood" and "Children's Fashion - 2018" in Almaty. As a result, "Lorat Textile" was able to sign contracts with Kazakh partners.

Also, as a result of negotiations with JSC "Uzbekistan Railways" with the participation of representatives of the National Company "Kazakhstan Temir Joli" and the Ministry of Agriculture of Kazakhstan, it was agreed to provide benefits for the transportation of goods by rail.

In accordance with the agreement between the Uzbek Commodity Exchange and the Commodity Exchange ETS JSC, the first foreign trading platform connected to the electronic exchange trading system has been launched in Almaty. In order to develop trade, economic, investment and tourism ties between the regions of the two countries, the visit of representatives of business circles to the regions of the Republic of Karakalpakstan, Jizzakh, Samarkand, Syrdarya, Tashkent, Khorezm regions and Tashkent city, taking into account regional aspects of economic cooperation exhibitions were organized.

At the first Uzbek-Kazakh interregional forum in Shymkent, agreements worth more than \$ 324.7 million were signed. 15 agreements on the development of bilateral relations between the regions were reached. In general, as a result of practical work on such cooperation, the signing of export contracts worth \$ 409.6 million between small and medium-sized businesses of the two countries in 2018 indicates a positive trend in regional cooperation. Also, one of the sectors that strengthens and develops economic cooperation is tourism. 2018 has been declared the Year of Uzbekistan in Kazakhstan and widely celebrated. In March 2018, the first Uzbek-Kazakh tourism forum was held in Nur-Sultan. It was attended by more than 200 tour operators from the two countries. Representatives of Uzbekistan took part in the international tourism fair "Kazakhstan international Trade" in the capital of Kazakhstan.

The media tour organized for the representatives of the national TV channel "Kazakhstan" in Tashkent, Samarkand and Bukhara gave the Kazakhs the opportunity to demonstrate the tourist potential of Uzbekistan. In order to create more convenience for tourists, the number of flights on the routes Almaty-Tashkent-Almaty, Nur-Sultan-Tashkent-Nur-Sultan has been increased.

Earlier, Uzbekistan launched the Tashkent-Shimkent, Tashkent-Almaty, Tashkent-Red Horde, Tashkent-Turkistan, Nukus-Ushkunur and Chirchik-Ushkunur routes. As a result of similar practical work aimed at developing tourism ties between the two countries, in 2018, more than 2 million Kazakh tourists visited Uzbekistan. This figure will serve to increase the investment potential of countries, as in 2018 it will account for almost 30% of the total number of tourists visiting the country.

Indeed, in recent years, Uzbek-Kazakh relations have been strengthening in all areas. In particular, the 2018 Central Asian Summit in Nur-Sultan as well as the ongoing dialogue between the leaders of the two neighbouring countries, the good neighbourliness between our peoples strengthened. As a result, economic cooperation between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan will define a new strategy for Central Asia, which will play an important role in further strengthening intra-regional cooperation.

In short, Kazakhstan is one of the important trade and economic partner of Uzbekistan, and their economic structures are almost identical, dominated by mining and raw materials-based industries based on natural resources. In addition, the economies of the countries of the region have a number of common advantages, such as cheap labour and agro-industrial potential. However, the scale and level of these reforms in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan differ depending on their nature and require more investment through the implementation of reforms.

After the declaration of independence of the two neighbouring republics, cultural cooperation in the political, economic and other spheres has expanded in the spirit of the new era. It is because "Kazakhstan is a close neighbour that has stood the test of time and closely linked with centuries-old ties of friendship and

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<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>7</sup> Trade of Uzbekistan with Central Asian countries- 2019 January-December. 14001001440700618.jpg.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>8</sup> https://uzanalytics.com/xalqaromunosabat/4436/ (04.05.2019).

brotherhood for us".9

There are a number of cultural and historical documents proving the brotherhood of the Uzbek and Kazakh peoples. These include the "Orkhon and Enisey" inscriptions on the banks of the Talas River, Mahmud Kashgari's "Devoni lug'atit turk", Yusuf Balasoguni's "Qutadgu bilig", Ahmad Yugnaki's "Hibbatul Haqoyiq", Zahiriddin Muhammad Babur's "Boburnoma", and Abulgazi Bakhadirxan's "Turkish family tree", "History of Rashid" by Muhammad Haydar Dulati, "Kipchak family tree" by Bebaris and Holdun, "History of Abulkhairi" by Osman Kohistan, as well as "Korkitota", "Shayboniynoma", "Zafarnoma", "Alpomish", "Gorogli" and others the heritage of many other folk oral creations can be cited as an example. <sup>10</sup>

Indeed, before gaining independence, a number of cultural events began to take place through the efforts of the leaders of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. In August 1990, one of such events was organized in the Palace of Culture of Sayram district (district) of Shymkent region. People's Artists of Uzbekistan, dancer Dilafruz Jabbarova and singer Ortiq Otajonov entertained the Kazakh brothers with their songs and dances. Jumaniyaz Jabborov, a member of the Writers' Union of Uzbekistan, who was with them, introduced his poems to the audience. Director Ismat Ergashev, who was part of the creative delegation, also showed Kazakh art lovers the film "Iron Lady" based on a poem by Sharof Boshbekov. Cultural figures of Uzbekistan were warmly welcomed by the hosts.

It is a confirmation of the decision to raise relations in all spheres, including culture, to a new level after the meeting of the leaders of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan.<sup>11</sup> Such cooperation began to serve to bring the two fraternal peoples closer together, to enrich their spiritual life.

We also see that the Council of Kazakh Literature, established under the Writers' Union of Uzbekistan in 1990, brings together more than 30 Uzbek Kazakh writers and poets once a month to hold literary discussions and poetry evenings to introduce our people to the masterpieces of Kazakh literature. <sup>12</sup>

Indeed, "our common history and closeness help us to solve the complex problems of today's world together, to effectively combat common threats for us, to build a future for new generations." <sup>13</sup>

It should be noted that in 1968, students of Kazakh philology of the Tashkent State Pedagogical Institute named after Nizami (now the University) began to collect masterpieces of oral art of the Kazakh people living in Uzbekistan. Over time, they have managed to collect many Kazakh folk proverbs, proverbs, short stories and epics, legends and fairy tales. In particular, a number of variants of folk epics such as "Olanqay pahlavon", "Askar botir", "Qorasoy qazi", "Barak botir", "Edigey" were identified. Folk tales and legends such as "Chicken and fox", "Bell rabbit", "Zangi bobo" are also enriched.<sup>14</sup>

Indeed, cooperation between the two brotherly countries - Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan - plays an important role in ensuring stability and expanding relations in Central Asia.

The national independence of the Central Asian countries, the new meaning of the economic, socio-political and cultural life of these countries, the rediscovery of the national identity, ethnic values and sense of belonging to the cultural heritage laid the foundation for the formation of national cultural centers. In order to ensure the diversity of national cultures, it is necessary to pay close attention to the activities of national cultural centers and public associations based on national identity, which are indicators of the process of ethnic integration in the region.<sup>15</sup>

Therefore, it is no coincidence that in the early years of independence, the leaders of the two countries met several times in Tashkent, Almaty, Kokchatov, the Red Horde and Shymkent. Because we all know that the situation in Central Asia and the continent largely depends on the policies pursued by these two great powers.

It is no secret that during the Soviet era, one-fifth of the territory of Kazakhstan was occupied by military test sites, airfields, military bases. About 500 nuclear tests have been conducted at the Semipalatinsk test site since

Volume 3, Issue XII, December 2020 | 263

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>9</sup> M.Sh.Mirziyoev "The consent of our people is the highest value given to our activity". Volume 2 – T.: "Uzbekistan" 2018. - 508 p.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>10</sup> The newspaper "Public's Word". 1994. January 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>11</sup> The newspaper "Soviet Uzbekistan". September 1, 1990.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>12</sup> The newspaper "Soviet Uzbekistan". 1990. September 4th.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>13</sup> M.Sh.Mirziyoev "The consent of our people is the highest value given to our activity". Volume 2 – T.: "Uzbekistan" 2018. - 508 p.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>14</sup> The newspaper "Soviet Uzbekistan". 1990. September 4th.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>15</sup> Nazarov N. Ethno-social cooperation in Central Asia. // Social thought. Human rights. № 4 (76) / 2016 - B. 32.

1949. In addition, all new weapons, including neutrons, chemical and bacteriological weapons, have been tested here. It is no secret that these horrific experiences have left a heavy mark not only in Kazakhstan, but also in the nature and lives of people in neighbouring countries. The test site was closed only due to the resolute struggle of the Kazakh government and the anti-nuclear movement. We fully see that Kazakhstan's full support for Kazakhstan's efforts to create a nuclear-free space has paved the way for cultural cooperation and political dialogue.

A number of examples show that the regions of Uzbekistan bordering on Kazakhstan and Kazakhstan bordering on Uzbekistan play an important role in strengthening interstate cultural cooperation. For example, in the Forish, Arnasay, Mirzachul districts of Jizzakh region, which are adjacent to Kazakhstan, there are many ethnic Kazakhs, and the role of the regional Kazakh National Cultural Center in the development of their national values, customs and traditions is growing. In early 1994, under the auspices of the Kazakh National Cultural Center in Uzbekistan, seven rural artists took part in the "Arguing" competitions for the Kazakh national team in the Kirov district of the neighbouring Shymkent region, all of which won prizes. The main prize went to Boriboy Urozimbetov, an employee of the Mirzachul district House of Culture. The second prize was won by Temirjon Alikhonov, the executive secretary of the "Nurli Jol" newsletter in the district.<sup>17</sup>

In particular, in March 1992, the First Congress of Kazakhs was held in Uzbekistan, and the Kazakh National-Cultural Center of Uzbekistan was established.<sup>18</sup> He became the successor of the Kazakh Information Center, established in 1989 at the Academy of Sciences of Uzbekistan. The main goal of its activities is to establish cooperation between the peoples of Kazakhstan and Uzbekistan. At the meetings of the two friendly heads of state in Tashkent and Almaty, the main directions in all spheres, including culture, were identified. This implies the need to maintain and further develop long-standing cultural ties.<sup>19</sup>

It includes Kazakh centers in Karakalpakstan, Jizzakh, Navoi, Syrdarya, Tashkent and Khorezm regions, as well as in Tashkent and Chirchik.<sup>20</sup> Today, the function of these centers is much broader and more diverse. Their main directions are the study of the Kazakh language cooperation with higher and secondary special educational institutions to help young people develop higher and vocational education in this language, meet the cultural needs of the Kazakh population, support young talents.<sup>21</sup>

National-ethnographic, folklore, youth and variety ensembles work at the Kazakh cultural centers. Among them are the instrumental ensemble "Dumbira", the ensemble "Darin" and other groups of songs and dances. The activity of the ethnographic museum "Shahsham" in Bostanlyk district is also commendable.

The Kazakh National-Cultural Center of Uzbekistan has established close relations with the Committee on International Relations and Friendship with Foreign Countries under the Cabinet of Ministers of the Republic of Uzbekistan. The anniversaries of Abay, Jambul Mukhtor Avezov, Sobit Mukanov, Gabit Musrepov and other prominent figures of Kazakh culture, literature and art were celebrated with great solemnity in the republic. Every year, international competitions of akyns "Aytis", national holidays "Altibakan", "Tusau keser" are held.<sup>22</sup>

The Tashkent meeting in January 1993 played an important role in the history of the fraternal countries. In January 1993, at the initiative of the President of Uzbekistan, the leaders of the five Central Asian republics agreed in Tashkent to strengthen regional integration, coordinate interstate economic systems, establish a regional newspaper and television company, and exchange ambassadors. Much of these agreements have been implemented. In particular, the regional newspaper "New day" was published. Uzbek television broadcasts in the languages of all fraternal peoples. The process of exchanging ambassadors has been completed. Since that meeting, the phrase "Central Asia" has been widely used. 23

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 $<sup>^{16}</sup>$  . The newspaper "Public's Word". 1994. January 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>17</sup> The newspaper "Public's Word". 1994. May 19.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>18</sup> Uzbekistan is our common home. - T.: "O'zbekiston", 2004. - Б. 52.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>19</sup> Murtazaeva R.H. Interethnic relations and tolerance in Uzbekistan. T: "University", 2007. - B. 137.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>20</sup> Uzbekistan is our common home. - T.: "O'zbekiston", 2004. - Б. 52.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>21</sup> Murtazaeva R.H. Interethnic relations and tolerance in Uzbekistan. T: "University", 2007. - B. 137.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>22</sup> Uzbekistan is our common home. - T.: "O'zbekiston", 2004. - Б. 52.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>23</sup> The newspaper "Public's Word". 1994. January 8.

At meetings in March 1993 in the Red Horde, in May in Shymkent, and in August in Kokchatov, the first presidents of these countries, NursultanNazarbayev and Islam Karimov, agreed to work closely together to preserve the Aral Sea and provide the population with basic necessities. Meetings in Almaty in July and November 1993 focused on the collapse of the ruble zone and the introduction of the national currency. At the same time, the two Presidents signed an agreement between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan on the prospects of economic cooperation for 1994-2000. Based on mutual calculations, the two countries emphasized the need to use existing domestic capacity to reduce the import of industrial products.<sup>24</sup>

As a result of the strengthening of cultural ties, the Uzbek Cultural Center was opened in Kazakhstan, and the Kazakh Cultural Center was opened in Uzbekistan. According to the agreement between the leaders of Tashkent and Shymkent regions, the allocation of additional places in higher education institutions for young people from neighbouring countries has served to further expand cooperation between the two neighbouring republics.<sup>25</sup>

On April 14, 2019, the visit of the President of the Republic of Kazakhstan Kasym-Jomart Tokayev began. During the visit of the new President, it was noted that the official protocol was also updated. In particular, the National News Agency of Uzbekistan, which has not yet interviewed any head of state, published an interview with President Kasim-Jomart Tokayev. The interview focused on the results achieved between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, the current state and prospects of cooperation.

Thus, the heads of state met for the first time since Kasym-Jomart Tokayev took office as President of Kazakhstan. The talks focused on the prospects for further expansion of bilateral friendship, good neighbourliness and strategic partnership, the priorities of cooperation in politics, trade and economy, investment, transport and communications, cultural and humanitarian spheres.

Shavkat Mirziyoyev and Kasim-Jomart Tokayev exchanged views on strengthening regional cooperation and important issues of international importance. The heads of state adopted a joint statement and also signed a package of bilateral documents aimed at developing multilateral relations between the two countries.<sup>26</sup>

## **CONCLUSION**

In recent years, China's economic role in Central Asia has been growing. This decline in investment activity between Russia and the West requires special attention to the regional trend in economic cooperation between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan. Changes in energy prices and declining activity could provide an important impetus for the development of regional economic cooperation, especially in Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan, in the context of structural reforms aimed at increasing competitiveness and efficiency in Central Asia and strengthening mutually beneficial cooperation under China's One Place, One Way project. This clearly demonstrates the participation of Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan on the basis of special economic interests and mutual benefit for the countries of the region. It should be noted that today the cultural cooperation between the two countries is developing steadily. Exchanges between Kazakh and Uzbek artists, scientists and cultural figures have become commonplace. It has been repeatedly acknowledged in the dialogue that close cultural cooperation between Uzbekistan and Kazakhstan serves "a common spiritual and cultural-historical heritage, unity of religion, closeness in language and human intelligence."

In short, in the words of President Sh. Mirziyoyev, "Just as our common historical heritage is inseparable, so is the present and future of our countries and peoples. We have always been close to each other and we will continue to need each other". To take advantage of untapped opportunities to develop economic and cultural cooperation at a high level; revitalization of trade and economic relations and industrial cooperation; encourage mutual investment; further revitalization of national cultural centers; it is expedient to strengthen cultural dialogue by preserving and developing the traditions of the peoples themselves.

<sup>25</sup> The newspaper "Public's Word". 1994. January 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>24</sup> The newspaper "Public's Word". 1994. January 8.

<sup>&</sup>lt;sup>26</sup> https://uzanalytics.com/iqtisodi%D0%B5t/4448/?fbclid=IwAR0WFxZDifzTV-stGWZG81Yq8IEdjJnthNHx9CHKOtH RhCw2eQ9HLe8uQPQ (26.04.2019)

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